Fire in Coal mines

37. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact hat out of the 70 identified mine fires, only 5 fires have been extinguished and 6 fires have been controlled at an expenditure of Rs. 73 crores out of a total estimated cost of Rs. 114 crores earmarked for 70 mines fires; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) what is the status of the remaining 59 fires;

(c) in what manner Government propose to tacvle these fires not only to save destruction of coal reserve but also for removing health hazards of the people living around those areas as well as to reduce th environmental problem in Jharia Coal Belt;

(d) whether it is a fact that equipments provided for fire fighting has since been used for normal coal production without maintaining any account; and

(e) whether any responsibility has been fixed for this gross mis-management and negligence in tackllng the fire problem, if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) An expenditure of about Rs. 73 crores out of a total estimated cost of Rs. 114 crores covering 22 projects to deal with the Jharia Coalfield fires was incurred on dealing with most of the fire sites. As a result of the efforts made five fires have been extinguished and a further spread of six has been controlled/contained. The fire fighting efforts are continuing through application of methods and techniques already being tried to deal with these fires. In view of the seriousness of the problem of fires in Jharia Coalfield and the difficulties coming in the way of extinguishing these fires with the available methods/technologies, the Government have been making efforts to seek technical assistance from other countries. The World Bank has since agreed to provide financial and technical assistance for a diagnostic study for development programme to deal with the coalfield fires. An IDA credit of US $ 12 million has been approved for the technical assistance of the work. The diagnostic study will also identify the social as well as environmental hazards to the people living in and around the fire affected areas of Jharia Coalfield. The diagnostic study will cover all the fire sites of Jharia Coalfield.

(d) and (e) Fire projects generally require Heavy Earth Moving Machinery (HEMM) and by the very nature of fire control operations, use of such machinery is only intermittent. Since such machinery can also be used for removal of overburden and production in opencast mines, these are gainfully deployed in the idle period in neighbouring mines in the overall interest of better utilisa'ion of the equipment, hence question of mismanagement and negligence does not arise.

Coal Supply to Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board

38. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantum of coal supplied by the Coal India Ltd. to the Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board since April, 1993;

(b) whether it is a fact that Tamil Nadu State Electricity Board has decided to import two million tonnes of Coal involving foreign exchange of about Rs. 275 crores; and

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction in respect thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The total quantity of coal supplied to power houses of

TNEB doing the period April-June, 1993 was 22.62 lakh tonces (provisional).

(b) It is learnt that Tamil Nadu Electricity Board have floated tenders for import of coal.

(c) Coal India Ltd. and Singareni Colliries Company Ltd. have been meeting the full requirements of Power Houses (as per assessment of CEA) in the country during the last two years. In view of the significant improvement in despatches of indigenous coal, the coal companies are confident of supplying the required quantity of coal to TNEB. Ministry of Coal is of the view that presently there is no need for import of coal by any of the Power Utilities. The coal stock position of almost all power stations is quite comfortable and in fact some power station have started regulating recepits of coal to check their Inventory costs.

Child labour in carpet industry

39. DR. BAPU KALDATE:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sanctioned as amount of Rs. 65 lakh to monitor the exploitation of child labour in the carpet industry in Varanasi, Mirzapur and Sonabhadra districts;

(b) if so, what are the details of result achieved;

(c) whether it is also a fact that certain buyers have threatened to boycott in case the exploitation of child labour in the carpet industry is not stopped and that the carpet manufacturers are requestion Government to extend some provisions of the Factories Act; and

(d) if so, what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Informations is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Implementation of Act on Child Labour

40. SHRI JAGMOHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received reports which indicate that the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is not being effectively implemented;

(b) what legislative and administrative measures are under Government's consideration to strengthen the enforcement machinery; and

(c) what time-frame Government have in view for the total eradication of the practice of child labour in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) Government are aware that violations of the provisions of the CL(P&R) Act do occur. Stricter enforcement is sought to be achieved through monitoring of action taken by competent authorities, review of the adequacy of legal provisions, strengethening and training of enforcement machinery.

(c) Since the problem of Child Labour has its roots in the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the country, setting up of a specific time frome for total eradication of child labour has not been considered practicable.

Group 'D' vacant posts in ESI Hospital

41. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state: